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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on language diversity in Chicano speech communities in the United States and its relation to the teaching of Spanish to Chicano bilinguals. Attempts to teach standard Spanish to Spanish-speakers in the United States have been unsuccessful for the most part, because the schools recognize only a single standard of "correctness" that is not always the same as that used in the communities. Attempts to teach Spanish as a mother tongue to Chicano students are reviewed, and the need to establish guidelines for the evaluation of current positions and programs is addressed. The sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and educational experiences of Chicanos are reviewed based on an assessment of the present sociolinguistic situation of Chicanos. This situation consists of a language repertoire with various codes that depart from the Mexican Spanish linguistic tradition, an asymmetrical type of bilingualism, and the use of Spanish viewed as transitional and not valued in the broader society. It is concluded that collaboration between sociolinguists and language instructors is needed since Spanish language instruction for Chicano bilinguals is not equivalent to instruction in a first language. (SW)

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LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN CHICANO SPEECH COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Sociolinguistic Working Paper

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LANGUAGE DIVERSITY IN CHICANO SPEECH COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING *

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This paper focuses on language diversity in Chicano speech communities[1] in the United States and its relation to the teaching of Spanish to Chicano bilinguals. As a result of an increasing interest in the teaching of Spanish to Spanish-speakers in the United States, attempts have been made to improve the teaching of that language to speakers who already speak other varieties which differ from standard Spanish. These efforts have been for the most part unsuccessful because the schools recognize only a single standard of "correctness" which is not always the same as that used in these communities. This paper reviews these attempts and addresses the need to establish guidelines for the evaluation of current positions and programs in the teaching of Spanish as a mother tongue to Chicano students.

Linguistic characteristics of speech communities are usually viewed as separate entities rather than the result of factors within the societal context. We believe that the following review of the sociopolitical, socioeconomic and educational experience of Chicanos is appropriate because it has contributed to the development of the present sociolinguistic situation: a language repertoire with various codes which depart from the Mexican Spanish linguistic tradition, an asymmetrical type of bilingualism, and the use of Spanish viewed as transitional and not valued in the broader society.

* Presented at the 9th World Congress of Sociology, Sociolinguistics Program, Uppsala, Sweden, August 14-19, 1978.

Sociopolitical Context

The Chicanos constitute the largest linguistic minority in the United States with a population estimated at ten to twelve million, and with eighty-seven percent residing in the five Southwestern states. Unlike most ethnic groups of European extraction, which have been accepted as equal in mainstream America, the history of Chicanos has been one of racial, economic and linguistic discrimination since the days of the conquest of the Southwest, a pattern similar to that experienced by the Black population.[2]

With regard to educational achievement, the findings of several studies--particularly those conducted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCC) in 1974 and 1975--reflect the systematic process of discrimination and exclusion suffered by the majority of Chicanos in education. Schools have generally not succeeded in narrowing the serious gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students; on the contrary, "the longer language minority students stay in school, the further they fall behind their classmates in grade level achievement" (USCCR 1975:19).[3] Educational institutions have been always committed to the maintenance of racial and ethnic barriers, and the status quo in general, with the implicit collaboration of professional organizations of educators who have chosen to ignore those socioeconomic, racial and ethnic issues which have not been usually included in standard histories of education in this country.[4] Thus, Chicanos have been low achievers in the public schools, particularly in the Southwest, where the language policies of the schools were dictated by an English-speaking land holding class whose aim was not to enhance the opportunities of the Spanish-speaking people but to have access to an illiterate, unskilled and cheap labor force. The majority of Chicanos live today in urban areas but are still absent from all important decision-making levels.[5]

The role of the school as a "melting pot" and social class equalizer has been a myth in this country as far as Chicanos are concerned. Schools have not been able to educate the poor and/or culturally different child because they are middle class institutions whose aim is to teach the mainstream society values, a common language, work habits, and the political faith of the dominant culture. Unable or not willing to cope with the particular characteristics of Chicanos, the schools simply labelled them as "disadvantaged," "culturally deficient," and "linguistically deprived," failing to realize that they came to school with a rich potential to be fully bilingual bicultural individuals, an asset in almost every country in the world, but a liability in an assimilationist and ethnocentric society.

Even though research studies that show no negative effects of bilingualism on school learning have long been available to this country (Andersson and Boyer 1970), all instruction in schools for the Spanish-speaking child was to take place in English. Only in the last decade, and to a large extent as a result of demands made by the Spanish-speaking communities, have the U.S. Congress and the Courts mandated that school districts with a large Spanish-speaking constituency offer bilingual education. Unfortunately, the great majority of these programs are compensatory and assimilationist (Kjolseth 1973, Gaarder 1978). Their goal is not to foster cultural and linguistic pluralism but simply to ease the transition of the Chicano from Spanish monolingualism or incipient bilingualism to English monolingualism. They are in reality English as a Second Language programs, "a way to hold closed the floodgates of discontent and to more efficiently transform the child to the desired world" (Hernández-Chávez 1977:51). Furthermore, the assumption that any compensatory or remedial program--including present bilingual education programs--produces higher academic levels of achievement has yet to be demonstrated (Cordasco 1974).

The educational system and the public at large have always supported the theory that blames failure on the child's cultural and linguistic distinctiveness, avoiding in this way the need to confront the economic and political issues related to the situation. In reality, linguistic problems present in a society are often the reflection of less obvious economic conflicts between groups of people in contact, such as the case of Anglos and Chicanos, and linguistic differences serve as an excuse for maintaining economic and social inequalities. In fact, one could say that the economic and political domination experienced by Chicanos has contributed greatly to their linguistic isolation and to the present sociolinguistic reality of these communities, which is slowly emerging from the studies currently being undertaken. As Sánchez (1978:186) points out, the process of urbanization which produces contact between groups has not influenced the situation either, because the two groups continue to be kept apart due to the way American society is stratified. This situation has helped to produce an asymmetrical type of bilingualism in which Spanish, one of the great world languages of wider communication, has a very low prestige as a language of the people, although, ironically, it is the most widely studied language in the high schools and colleges of this country (Gaarder 1978). Lack of respect for the language of the inferior dominated group, as well as lack of uses for Spanish outside intimate domains, has contributed to the creation of the present trend of shift from Spanish monolingualism to functional English bilingualism or English monolingualism, as it has been mentioned in several studies (Solé 1977, Sánchez 1978, Aguirre 1978), a process that could be completed within a period of two to three generations after migration. Nevertheless, there are several factors, such as the constant incorporation of newly arriving Mexican workers into the barrios, that reinforce Spanish language loyalty in these communities.

The sociolinguistic reality of Chicanos in this country, and particularly in the Southwest, should not be viewed simply as a static phenomenon but as a dynamic reflection of the societal framework in which these linguistic events take place, a framework often neglected in the polemics around linguistic issues, bilingualism and bilingual education.

The Sociolinguistic Situation

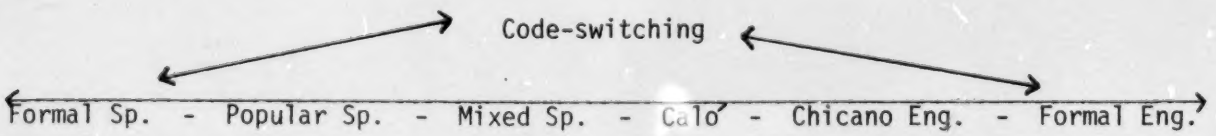
Regardless of the fact that Chicanos constitute the most important linguistic minority in America, little is known at present about language varieties, patterns of language use and language loyalty, and attitudes toward English and Spanish among these speakers. Research on bilinguals in this country in the 60's was heavily influenced by the works of linguists who dealt primarily with the concept of interference, the various ways in which two "pure" codes influence each other in the areas of phonology, syntax and lexicon. The term "interference" has been an umbrella term which covers different aspects of bilingualism, addressing partially the cause of the phenomena rather than describing it. This trend has influenced research on Chicano Spanish which tends to be looked at not as a self-contained system but as a deviation from standard Spanish, with special emphasis on long lists of borrowings and loan translations from English. And although heterogeneity is the rule in bilingual communities as much as it is in monolingual settings, variation in style is ignored, as if to say that Chicanos were single-style speakers.

Another criticism that has been voiced by other scholars is that research has not involved the non-academic community. We need to find out how the community perceives its linguistic situation, what types of linguistic issues they identify with, etc. The issue of which variety should be used in school, for example, could certainly benefit from community participation. As Fishman has said, "languages live in communities and if they 'belong' to anyone, they

belong to their speech communities" (1977:321).

More recent studies about bilingualism in Chicano communities have argued that previous studies based on the interference model have tried to account for an ideal bilingual who controls his/her choice of language rigidly, alternating between the two only when there is a change in topic or in the participants in the speech event. This ideal type of bilingualism is, nevertheless, seldom found in bilingual and multilingual communities, where many speakers have not been exposed to formal instruction in the two languages, or even in one of them. Susan Ervin-Tripp has pointed out to this effect that where bilinguals have for a long time interacted mainly with other bilinguals, "the model for each of these languages is not monolingual usage of these languages but rather the languages spoken by the bilinguals themselves" (1967:78). Departing from the limiting view of those who have considered speech communities as homogeneous with no room left for variation or language interplay, new investigators have approached the study of bilingual speech from a more functional perspective which has been particularly influenced by ideas put forward by Hymes (1964), Gumperz (1964), and Labov (1966).

A Chicano speech community repertoire can be described as a sociolinguistic continuum in which the distance between the two extremes is bridged by intermediate varieties, some of them interlingual, with various degrees of borrowing and code-switching.[6] If one looks at this continuum, one sees very clearly that instead of being internally homogeneous systems, each of the languages used for daily interaction in the community is composed of varieties which in turn show varying degrees of similarity to each other.



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Mixed Spanish and code-switching are particularly interesting because they can also be discussed in terms of a continuum, with code-switching at one end of the spectrum and integration (borrowings, loan-translations) at the other.

There are no "pure" mixed-Spanish speakers just as there are no "pure" code-switching speakers either. Each speaker in the community has either productive or receptive competence of a span of this continuum. Movement along this continuum is governed by factors such as social domain, geographical origin, extent of usage of the two languages at home, and pressure to acquire the formal variety, but above all by inter-generational variables.

The breakdown between formal Spanish and Popular Spanish, Caló, and Code-switching is fairly clear. Mixed Spanish, however, is assigned separate status because some speakers, particularly those who are first generation speakers, or those who have had greater exposure to formal Spanish avoid using it and condemn its use.[7]

There have been a few authors who have addressed the possibility of certain varieties of Chicano speech being a pidgin or a creole. However, pidgins and creoles can only be explained by reference to other languages, and they are often mutually unintelligible to each other and to the standard variety. The varieties in question are mutually intelligible since any bilingual speaker could easily understand exchanges in these varieties if sufficient context is provided. One could acknowledge that processes of pidginization such as reduction and simplification are indeed present in Mixed Spanish, but we are not in the presence of a drastic restructuring of Spanish grammar, and furthermore, Mixed Spanish shares a large number of linguistic features with formal Spanish. The morphosyntactic organization is predominantly Spanish, and cases of syntactical influence from English are generally more common in formal domains. There

is also an important factor that will always hinder the development of a pidgin, and that is the constant exposure to more formal varieties of Spanish, especially because of contact with Mexican nationals and new immigrants.

Nevertheless, negative attitudes toward these varieties are similar to those held by the laymen with regard to pidgins and creoles, due perhaps to a failure to distinguish between attitudes toward language varieties and attitudes toward speakers of those varieties. Hymes has stated that pidgins and creoles "have been explained not by historical and social forces, but by inherent ignorance, insolence and inferiority" (1971:3). In effect, Mixed Spanish, Code-switching and Caló are varieties which have come to be evaluated primarily in terms of the low status of their speakers.[8] Especially within Spanish language teaching circles, as a result of narrow and unrealistic standards of linguistic purity and prescriptiveness, these interlingual varieties are perceived as "corrupt" Spanish and further, as a rejection of the mother tongue. The Chicanos themselves have been convinced that all they speak is "Tex Mex" or "Spanglish," some kind of Spanish that nobody understands. Many speakers speak some kind of formal Standard Spanish but having had no formal education through Spanish and thus lacking the criteria for defending their quality, depreciate their speech. Language policies which constantly devaluate Chicano local dialects have greatly contributed to the failure experienced by Chicanos taking Spanish in college and at the high school level, which is higher than the one present among English-speaking students who are learning the basics of the language.

Future studies dealing with issues related to bilingualism in Chicano communities will have to address their total sociopolitical and sociolinguistic situation. It is not possible to explain the sociolinguistic behavior of the speakers in question by working only within the framework of the standard

varieties of the two languages spoken in these communities.

The Teaching of the Spanish Language to Chicano Bilinguals

Given the sociolinguistic context described above, it is not surprising to find that the Spanish-speaking profession in this country has paid very little attention to the language spoken natively by Chicano bilinguals. For the most part, this profession has concerned itself with the teaching of Spanish, as a subject, primarily at the junior high school, high school, and college level. In keeping with the national preference for elite or academic bilingualism, such instruction has been directed exclusively at monolingual English speakers who consider the study of a foreign language to be a part of the normal academic curriculum. Within this perspective, it is generally assumed that such monolingual learners will derive a number of important benefits from the study of a foreign language (for example: appreciation of other cultures, understanding of the structure of language in general, the exercise of important intellectual faculties, etc.), if not actually attain communicative competence in the target language.

The Chicano bilingual does not fit comfortably into this established system and logically, in the light of this general orientation toward its role and purpose, the Spanish-teaching profession has largely ignored the existence of the large number of native Spanish speakers in the United States. The reasons for this exclusion are, however, complex. On the one hand, members of the profession have been sincere in their confusion concerning how instruction designed to produce basic fluency can in any way profit fluent speakers. On the other hand, it is also clear that other less neutral factors have been of some importance. To begin with, a significant number of Spanish-teaching professionals, particularly those who teach at the junior high school and high school levels, are non-native speakers of the Spanish language. With some frequency, these persons have taken the required courses for certification but have not achieved

the degree of fluency and comfort characteristic of those persons who have spent a period of time in a Spanish-speaking country or who frequently interact with the members of a Spanish-speaking community. When confronted with native fluent speakers of the language, their response ranges from a fundamental fear of not being able to understand what these natives say, to uneasiness concerning their own fluency, to a compensating disdain for what they take to be an "inferior" form of the Spanish language. Normally, teacher training at the secondary level, and indeed at the college level, does not include training in basic sociolinguistics. Thus, most teachers are unaware of the artificiality of their own classroom register and of that register in which they were trained. They often respond, therefore, to perfectly standard informal speech with suspicion and in many cases label a student's speech defective because s/he does not respond in complete sentences.

The disdain, however, for students' home language is not exclusive to non-native Spanish-speaking teachers of the language. Similar prejudices concerning the language of Chicano bilinguals have been expressed by numerous native-speaking professionals from different regions of the Spanish-speaking world. Indeed it was this particular position, the commitment to "undoing the damage that has been done at home," that first resulted in the profession's undertaking of the instruction of Chicano speakers.

Essentially, in its early stages, such instruction took place within the foreign language classroom. The approach was one providing remediation by having the student "learn the language from the beginning." In an era deeply influenced by the behaviorist tradition of language learning, it was not considered impossible for a student to "unlearn" one set of habits and to acquire another.

Much has happened within the Spanish teaching profession within the last several years. Perhaps in line with the interest in minority languages, in ethnicity, and in bilingualism; or perhaps simply as a result of increased enrollment of Chicanos at the university and college levels; Spanish-teaching professionals have begun to examine the entire question of appropriate instruction for native Spanish-speaking students.

Progress includes the fact that at this point, it is almost universally accepted that instruction directed at the fluent or almost fluent bilingual cannot take place in the environment of the traditional foreign language classroom with non-speakers.

In many cases this conclusion was reached after it was seen that the desired expiration of "errors" did not result from "learning the language from the beginning" along with non-speakers. In such cases, the purpose of the move toward the separation of the two groups was to provide more time and attention to the correction of the many stigmatized features which were considered to be characteristic of all Chicano speakers.

In other cases, the desire for separate classes was motivated by the realization that teaching a language as a native language and teaching a language as a second or foreign language are two very different processes with little in common with regard to approaches, methods and techniques.

Essentially, at the moment, professionals concerned with teaching Spanish to Chicano bilinguals have, for the most part, embraced one of the following philosophies:

1. that the exclusive role of the Spanish language class is to instruct Chicano students in the use of the spoken standard dialect (Barker, 1972; Baker, 1966; De León, 1976).

2. that the role of formal language instruction in Spanish for Chicano students is to provide a comprehensive language development program which focuses on Spanish language literacy as a primary goal and the development of increased oral proficiency, awareness of the norms of the standard dialect, etc. as secondary goals (Sánchez, 1976, Valdés-Fallis, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1978).

The Teaching of the Standard Dialect as a Principal Goal

Members of the profession concerned primarily with teaching the spoken standard dialect are very similar in orientation to groups within the English-teaching profession who have reacted negatively to the speech of black Americans. They see their primary role as involving the remodeling of the students' oral language. From this perspective, the ideal finished product of Spanish language instruction dedicated to Chicano students would be able to function undetected among educated Latin Americans.

There is no real agreement, however, on how such a dramatic change will be achieved. One faction, equivalent to those whom Fasold and Shuy (1970) have labeled eradicators, insists on the abandonment of the language variety students bring with them and requires its substitution with the prestige or standard variety. The other faction, the biloquialists, claim that the same results can be achieved by providing students with a comparison between varieties and instruction on language appropriateness so that they may be able to choose intelligently the variety they wish to employ.

In general, professionals committed to this type of instruction advocate exposing students to long lists of stigmatized features variously designated anglicismos, barbarismos, arcaísmos, etc. (which are thought to be present in the speech of all Chicanos) so that they may remember to replace the "correct" item in their normal speech. Classroom activities include pattern drills,

repetition drills, translation, and most especially a prescriptively oriented grammatical approach centering on "Chicano errors." As a whole this group of Spanish-teaching professionals seems to be unaware that there is little evidence in the research on second-dialect teaching which suggests that instruction along these lines can be effective. Moreover, many of these professionals have not yet understood that their prescriptive approach toward grammar and its concomitant devaluation of the students' language result in negative responses toward the study of Spanish and in very little interest in maintaining it as a resource of some value.

While lip service is given to the question of language diversity, there is no understanding of how it exists in a real-life setting. There is no awareness, for example, of how speech styles alternate in monolingual Spanish-speaking communities and no conception of the fact that both standard and non-standard varieties are always present in bilingual as well as in monolingual communities. Bilingualism is seen, not as an asset, but as a handicap and there is little interest in the understanding of how two languages function in a bilingual's everyday life. Chicanos are simply considered to be a homogeneous group characterized by the same language "problems"; many of them due directly to the influence of English. Little effort is made, therefore, to consider existing studies of Chicano communities. Indeed it is ironic that members of the profession committed to this first aim, dedicated as they are to changing students' speech, have not developed an approach based on an accurate view of the language of the students with whom they work, an approach which might contribute significantly to their largely unsuccessful efforts.

The Comprehensive Approach to the Teaching of Spanish to Chicano Bilinguals

As opposed to the first group described above, the members of the Spanish teaching profession who advocate basic literacy as a primary goal have very

little in common with one another with the exception of their opposition to the teaching of the standard dialect as a principal aim. They represent a number of views concerning the objectives of instruction for native Spanish-speakers and range in orientation from very strict prescriptivism to the most advanced acceptance of language diversity. There are those who, disenchanted with the poor effects of instruction which strives to extirpate "errors" by the methods described above, hope to achieve the same ends by concentrating on writing and composition skills. They are optimistic that such an approach will be less objectionable to those who are concerned with students' self-image because comparisons relating to correctness and incorrectness can be made under the guise of teaching the written standard. There are others, on the other hand, who champion this approach because they believe that in our society, the reading and writing of one's language is a basic and fundamental right. They point out that if one does not question the teaching of reading and writing to speakers of English, who in the course of their lifetime may make little use of these abilities, one cannot question the parallel objective for bilingual Chicano speakers in their first language. Still others, however, advocate a teaching commitment which goes beyond instruction in basic literacy and which aims to bring forth the implementation of comprehensive language development programs. Such programs, as opposed to those designed for the teaching of reading and writing skills, would seek to develop the Spanish proficiency of Chicano bilinguals so that they might approximate the levels of achievement developed in English as a result of their educational experiences in this language. Objectives for instruction, therefore, would include: the development of basic spelling skills, of basic reading skills, of basic composition skills; the introduction of traditional grammar; the development and growth of vocabulary; the exposure to a variety of experiences in the

spoken language, etc.

At this time much thought and energy is being devoted to the development of methodologies appropriate to the objectives described above. Considerable work has already been done in the area of teaching orthography, especially with regard to instruction in grapheme/phoneme equivalences, in a situation which exhibits much transfer from English-language orthographical conventions. Recently, increasing attention has been given to the elaboration of materials designed to teach reading effectively. It has become clear that native speakers cannot be expected to begin immediately reading in a language in which their experience has been exclusively oral. It is agreed, therefore, that development of reading skills must be approached in sequential steps which maximize the learner's familiarity with reading in the other language. Significant questions have also begun to be raised concerning the role of grammar as a tool in the teaching of reading and writing as well as its place as a bona fide subject worthy of study for its own sake in a total language development program. Classroom materials are now being written which focus on the structure of the language as an area about which every educated student must know something, rather than as a set of prohibitions and prescriptions. Additionally, attention has focused on the teaching of both oral and written expression. It has been pointed out that in order to provide opportunities for the development of real-language skills, students must be exposed to a variety of language situations in which different styles and levels of speech are used. A classroom context must be provided which, at the very least, encourages the discussion of a number of subjects which have previously been handled by the students in their second language. At the same time, instruction in written expression must make clear that writing goes beyond mere mechanics to the clear expression of ideas.

Significant as these developments are, the total picture which emerges at the moment is one of frustration. Professionals trained in the teaching of a second language are suddenly beginning to see themselves needing to function in areas in which they are not prepared. Most know little about teaching orthography, teaching accentuation, teaching techniques of clarity in writing, and less than nothing about the teaching of reading. They are comfortable with teaching traditional grammar and seriously wonder if it can be taught non-prescriptively. More importantly, however, they are beginning to become conscious of the importance of language diversity and of its implications for the teaching which they hope to undertake. Increasingly they are becoming conscious of the fact that techniques which are used in the classroom need to be based on information concerning how language actually works in a real-life setting.

Questions such as the following have become common:

1. What is a native speaker?
2. Which different kinds of bilinguals have enough proficiency in Spanish to participate in courses for native speakers?
3. What is enough proficiency?
4. Does fluency in Spanish correlate with success in attaining reading and writing skills?
5. How does one measure proficiency, fluency, or both?
6. What kinds of placement instruments are appropriate for a bilingual with no reading language skills in Spanish?
7. What are the functions of Spanish in the community?
8. Is language maintenance a legitimate goal given the language attitudes of the community towards Spanisn?

9. What is the attitude of the community toward the value of reading and writing in Spanish?
10. What are the attitudes of the community to various styles or levels of Spanish? to other regional varieties? to their own speech?
11. How can the language situation existing in a community be exploited in order to bring about expansion of total proficiency?
12. What resources in the community, traditions in joke telling, story telling, verbal dueling, etc., can be incorporated into the curriculum?
13. What is the difference in the effectiveness of instruction which uses materials which speak to the experience of the working class or migrant Chicano as opposed to materials written for Latin America or Spain, or simply translated from English originals?

The Study of Language Diversity and the Future of Language Teaching

Clearly the answers to the above questions will not be arrived at by Spanish-teaching professionals working alone. Progress will come as there begins to be, or continues to be, collaboration between sociolinguists and language instructors. Major advances will come as on-going research on Chicano communities is translated into materials and methodologies. Change will come as institutions of higher education incorporate instruction in sociolinguistics into teacher-training programs. Most important, however, significant change will take place if a large enough number of professionals see themselves not as Spanish language teachers or sociolinguists, but rather as language planners and as social engineers. The entire concept of teaching Spanish to minority speakers in this country cannot be seen as a simple or neutral issue. Spanish language instruction for Chicano bilinguals is not equivalent to

instruction in a first language for these speakers involves either continued attack on their self-worth through a devaluation of their home varieties of Spanish, or an opportunity to take pleasure in the development of an existing and valuable resource.

Notes

[1] Spanish-speaking people of Mexican descent living in the United States call themselves Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Hispanos, Latinos or Chicanos, depending upon the region in which they have settled, their socioeconomic experiences, their political beliefs, etc. The term Chicano was used in the past to designate only lower class Mexicans but since the emergence of the Chicano nationalistic movement it has been used as a symbol of the struggle for socioeconomic and linguistic equality, especially with regard to the right to maintain and develop their original first language.

[2] According to the Census Bureau (1975), the median income for Chicanos in 1975 was $9,546 compared with $13,719 for Anglos, with 79% of them holding low wage positions.

[3] All studies show that Chicanos are consistently below the other students in all academic studies. The 1966 Coleman Report showed that Chicanos fall significantly behind white students in academic achievement. By the 12th grade, Chicanos are 4.1 years behind the national norm in Math achievement, 3.5 in verbal ability, and 3.3 in reading. In Texas, the average Anglo over 25 years old has twelve years of schooling, the average Black nearly nine, and the average Chicano 6.7. A study done in 1976 and released by the National Center for Educational Statistics showed that Spanish-speaking students enrolled in grades 5-12 were about twice as likely to be two or more grades below the grade levels expected for their ages (Forum, Vol. 1, No. 8, October 1978. Similar findings are reported by the Educational Commission of the States in 1977 (National Assessment of Educational Progress Newsletter, Volume X, June 1977).

[4] For a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the treatment of minorities in public schools, as well as for a theoretical explanation of the low achievement of Chicanos in public schools, see among others Weinberg 1977 and Gardenas-Gardenas 1972.

[5] Chicanos are poorly represented in positions which control or influence educational outcomes. They are considerably underrepresented in the faculties of teacher education programs, on the professional staff of State Departments of Education, and as principals and school board members (USCCR 1974:73). In spite of the high concentration of Chicanos in the Southwest, the USCCR found that in Southwestern schools they constituted only 10.4% of superintendents, 5.4% of counselors, 4% of teachers, 3.6% of librarians, and 7.06% of principals (USCCR 1971:41, 45, 48, 53).

[6] The categorization of the Spanish varieties given here is based on a study done in a working-class Chicano neighborhood in Austin, Texas (Elias-Olivares 1976). It could certainly vary for other bilingual settings.

[7] One may argue that the speech varieties shown in the diagram are a continuous range of linguistic variables (Labov 1966) and not discrete varieties. These varieties are categorical from an ethnographic point of view

in that they are named and perceived as distinct by Chicano speakers. However, they could also be treated as linguistic variables; that is, there are also statistically measurable tendencies holding between the varieties. A considerable number of these variables, such as /s/ pronunciation can and should be studied as such. In fact, it is crucial for our understanding of bilingual communities to realize that speakers perceive and conceive of the linguistic situation in discrete, categorical terms even though behaving in variable terms.

8 Research concerning attitudes toward varieties of Spanish is scarce. Teachers in El Paso, Texas classify all Spanish spoken by Chicanos as "border slang" or "Tex Mex" (Ornstein and Goodman 1974). In Austin, Texas, older speakers express feelings of linguistic insecurity and inferiority regarding the Spanish they use, whereas younger Chicanos look at their ways of speaking as an expression of ethnic pride. Speakers also code-switch in order to demonstrate their bilingualism and their lack of assimilation into the dominant society (Gumperz and Hernández 1972, Elías-Olivares 1976). In a study done in Edinburg, Texas, it was found that students from Mexico and South America deprecate most varieties of Southwest Spanish. In addition, it was shown that the evaluative dimension and the solidarity dimension do not necessarily run exactly parallel, and that hearers categorize others on the basis of the sound of language varieties heard frequently but not necessarily understood (Amastae and Elías-Olivares 1978). For a more comprehensive review of the literature, see Ornstein (1978).

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RELEVANCE STATEMENT: Elias-Olivares and Valdes-Fallis

This paper offers proposals for the teaching of Spanish to Chicano bilinguals, drawing on recent sociolinguistic research in Chicano communities. It is critical of approaches which view the Spanish of Chicanos as inherently inferior and which therefore aim at eradicating Chicano Spanish from the speech of students. The authors argue that in Chicano communities there is a rich and heterogeneous linguistic diversity, a richness and diversity which has just begun to be studied by sociolinguists. Their point is that this community sociolinguistic situation would be the starting point for the teaching of Spanish. Rather than trying to eradicate Chicano Spanish, classroom practitioners should use it and build from it in the teaching of speaking, reading, and writing skills. It is crucial to the authors' proposal that the current negative attitude toward the language and speech of Chicanos, held by many teachers, be eradicted.